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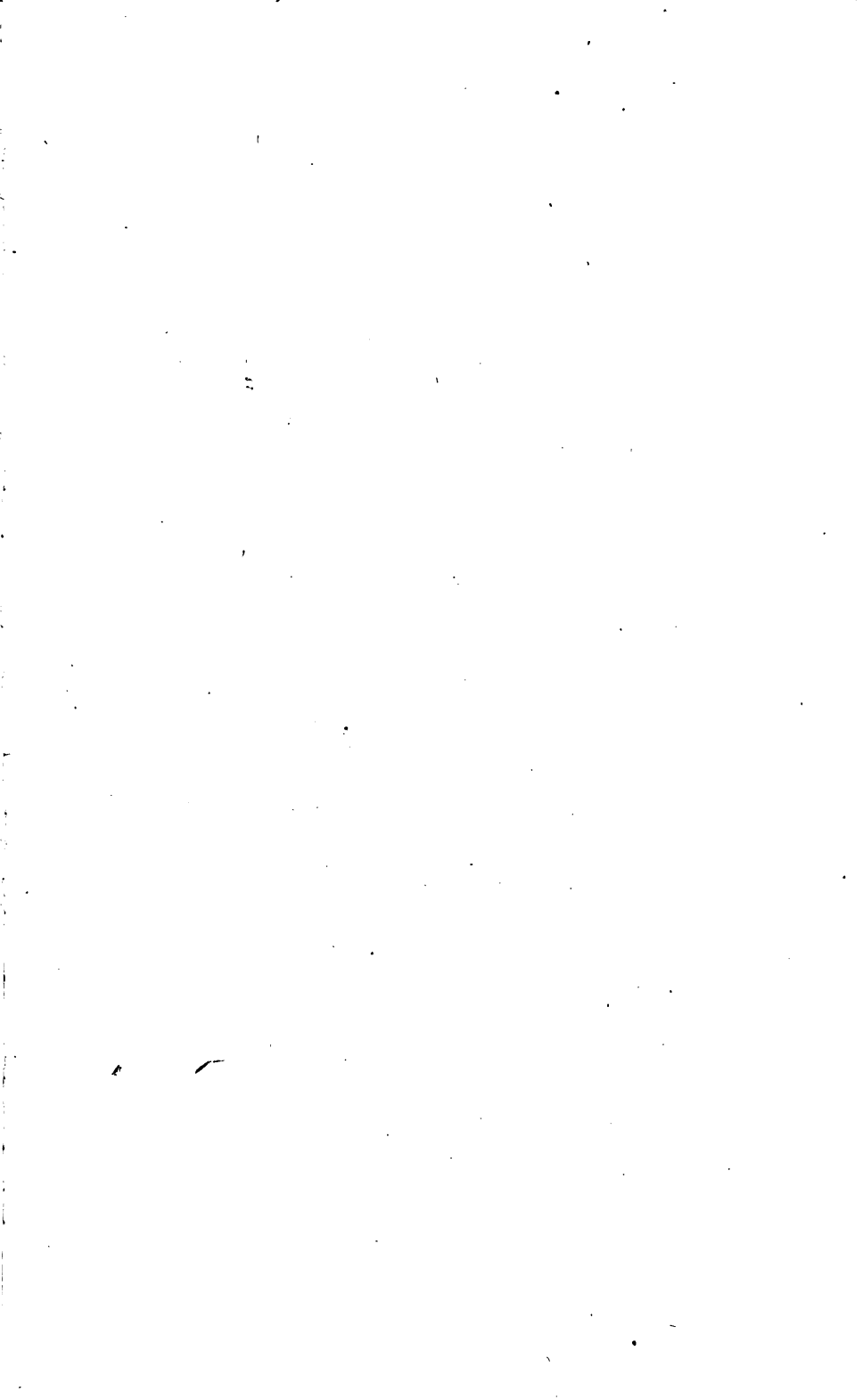
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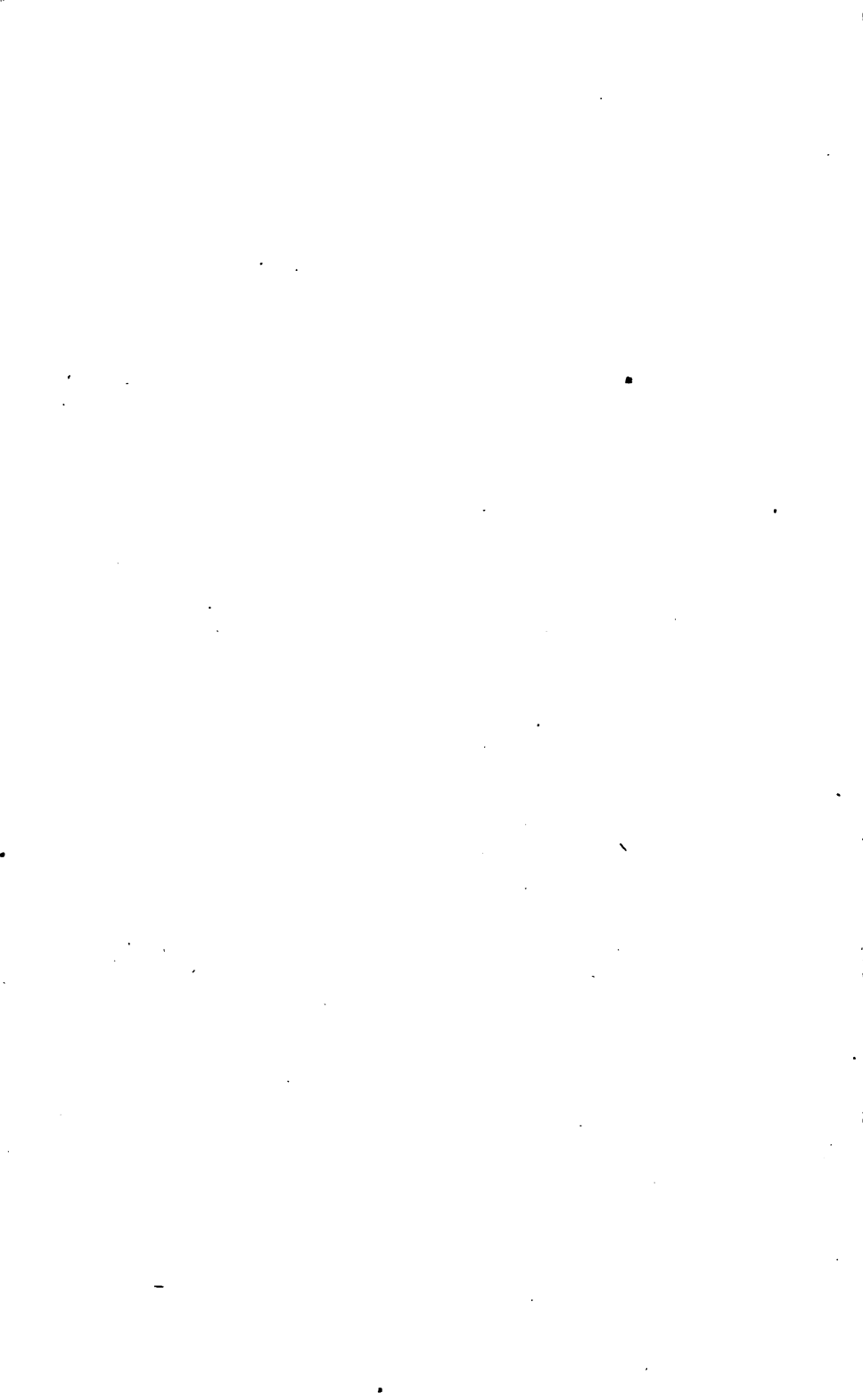
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BEQUEST OF
GEORGINA LOWELL PUTNAM
OF BOSTON

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A

SECOND LETTER

FROM

1st Baron

Thomas Denman 1779-1854

LORD DENMAN TO LORD BROUGHAM,

ON THE

FINAL EXTINCTION OF THE SLAVE TRADE,

WITH

REMARKS

ON A LATE

NARRATIVE OF THE NIGER EXPEDITION

IN 1841.

LONDON:

J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.

1849.

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A

SECOND LETTER.

Jan. 1, 1849.

AN accident has directed my attention to the narrative lately published of the Expedition of the Niger in 1841, by W. Allen, R.N., Commander, second officer of the *Albert*, and Dr. Thomson, one of the medical officers in that vessel. The work is full of interest. While the melancholy record of sickness and death, deliberately braved and endured for an object of immense importance, inspires the highest respect for the heroic devotion of men suffering in the cause of humanity; the report of their transactions with several of the native chiefs, in execution of the powers with which they were entrusted, is highly valuable; and the information they afford on all subjects connected with that part of Africa will be found of great practical utility:

The authors paint in glowing colours the magnificent scenery, the rich and luxuriant vegetation, the beautiful sunsets behind lofty chains of mountain land, and stately forests. They saw with delight wild nature in some open spaces wearing the semblance of English parks and lawns. Large tracts presented the aspect of careful cultivation, and in some villages the cultivated fields were fenced in. There were markets in the towns, and some rude manufactures. They detail the numerous productions of that fertile soil—the ivory, the mineral treasures, inestimable articles of commerce. The exchange of these in regular trade would find useful employment for thousands, and their distribution in the more favoured communities of the civilized world would increase and diffuse the elegances of life, and add to the splendour and luxury of the highest classes, while they would promote the comfort of all.

They likewise found, among the various tribes which they visited, a strong propensity to avail themselves of these great natural advantages. “Among the people there is an established idea of justice, and the essential character of all is decidedly commercial.” (Vol. ii. 431.) “The strongest characteristic of the inhabitants is their love of traffic. It is indeed their ruling passion, which, if rightly developed, may become the in-

strument for raising them in the scale of nations." (Vol. i. 398.) Nor is it merely the vagrant traffic of smugglers or gipsies, for their great men and princes are ready to negotiate and make treaties on a comprehensive scale. The model agreement sent out by Lord J. Russell in his admirable instructions was fully explained and distinctly understood by Obi, king of Abo, and by the Attah of Iddah, before they acceded to it. They freely condemned the traffic in slaves, and were highly pleased by the hopes held out of a commerce in other articles with England. The former "acknowledged that he had carried on the slave trade hitherto to a great extent, but that he knew it to be wrong; now, however, having heard the truth from us, he would no longer continue a practice which he knew was unjust." At the same time he said "that it had ceased in a great measure, from the *difficulty he found in selling the slaves,* which we explained by telling him that the queen's ships kept up a strict blockade all along the coast in order to prevent the approach of slave vessels. He seemed very much pleased with this*; but said repeatedly, if we wished him to substitute lawful trade in the produce of the country, we must send ships to take it away."

These two chiefs bear sway in extensive

* This was in August, 1841.

territories, and govern numerous subjects. They appear to possess the qualities which are admitted as forming a natural right to dominion over an uncivilized people. Their capitals contain a population of near 10,000 inhabitants each. Their courts displayed a gradation of ranks ; their manners, self-respect and a sense of what was due to others. A large multitude out of doors attended their *palavers*, and expressed a lively sympathy in what was passing. The Attah of Iddah sold the Commissioners a large tract of land, on which the experiment of the model farm was to be made.

The affectionate disposition for which the African is famed was evinced by the joy with which they greeted each other after a long separation. Captain Allen had the good fortune to meet with some who hailed him as an old acquaintance, having known him on an earlier expedition, in 1832 ; and where his former host, whom he describes as a man of sense and character, had been removed by death, his son on one occasion, on another his aged brother, received the captain on the footing of old friendship. They remembered and inquired after poor Lander. The minds of the natives had been improved in some respects by the intercourse with Englishmen. Vaccination was practised among them ; they

had learned to prefer the medical skill of their visitors to the Fetiche charms anciently relied on. King Obi's sister, a personage of great distinction, and exercising some power, even went the length of declaring her conviction, that the African superstitions were absurd.

At the confluence of the rivers the steamers parted company, the *Albert* ascending the Niger, the *Soudan* navigating the Chadda, while the *Wilberforce* proceeded with many sick to the coast. In less than two months all were compelled by sickness to make for the coast for the recovery of health. In June, 1842, the Niger expedition, commenced under such high patronage, and with such auspicious circumstances, was declared to be at an end. Captain Bird Allen had fallen a victim to disease; Captain W. Allen, and the leader of the expedition, Captain Trotter, were on their way to England; Lieut. Webb was, however, commissioned to take the *Wilberforce* up the Niger with eight officers and a crew (as I understand) of native Africans. He likewise was soon compelled by sickness to give up his enterprise, the principal object of which seems to have been to ascertain the fate of Mr. Carr, who had remained behind his former companions, with the intention of erecting, and settling on, the model farm. There is every reason to fear, though no direct proof, that that unfortunate gentleman had been

murdered, for the sake of his property, by some native plunderers. But Lieut. Webb, on his return, appears to have met with a repulse rather than a reception from these new allies, King Obi and the Attah of Iddah, unpropitiated by the presents, compliments, and engagements of the preceding year. There is reason to fear that they were in some way connected with the murder of Mr. Carr, cognizant of it, if not conniving. Both had broken the treaties entered into, and permitted the slave trade to revive in their dominions, and for their own benefit.

The explanation here offered of the change thus wrought in their feelings does not appear altogether satisfactory. Captain Allen thinks that they were justified in neglecting to perform their part of the bargain by the breach of promise of which our commissioners were guilty, having sent no ships and no merchandize. It seems more reasonable to ascribe the loss of our influence to the melancholy contrast between the spectacle presented by our steamers in ascending the river and in returning. The dismal change probably weakened their confidence in the power and in the good sense of Englishmen, and threw the chiefs into the hands of their old accomplices in slave trading. My own conjecture is, that that inveterate and enormous evil at which the expedition was aimed, so long practised and

encouraged by white men for their own gain, had left feelings of distrust on their minds which no treaties or conferences had eradicated, and that the known guilt of Europe kept them in continual suspicion of their friends and benefactors, uninvited and unexpected as they were. Of these feelings some examples are scattered through the narrative. With Lieut. Webb's return, hastened by sickness, the expedition finally ended. I need not add that it was never resumed.

The gentlemen who record these events are rendering a public service, though late. By pointing out all the minor circumstances which thwarted their scheme, they may prevent the recurrence of a result so calamitous. We are also indebted to them for their suggestion of the measures to be hereafter adopted towards effecting the great object of their undertaking, the great principle proclaimed in Lord J. Russell's instructions—THE FINAL EXTINCTION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

I take their main suggestion to be that a colony should be founded at the confluence of the Niger and the Chadda, with the full complement of officers for such an establishment, under the government of this country and the rule of English law. It is, however, recommended that we should be cautious of imposing our own system

on the natives ; that these should be the principal agents, in the first instance, of carrying on a work so dangerous to Europeans, and afterwards should be employed in office ; that the laws, usages and customs prevailing among them, instead of being abolished, should be made subservient to our purpose, and their disposition and habits more carefully consulted. " For the defence of this settlement one hundred disciplined men from our African regiments, together with a certain number of the inhabitants, enrolled as militia, and two or three lightly armed steamers, would not only be a sufficient force for self-defence ; but also to preserve all the nations within reach from the horrors of war, and thereby be a great means of *suppressing the slave trade*, not only on the river, but to a wide extent on its banks, especially if aided by the independent chiefs, who would gladly enter into defensive alliances with us, with the exception of the Filatahs, who might easily be kept in order, as far as their operations on the river are concerned," *—and all these hints are assuredly well worthy of mature consideration.

I cannot but regret the tone of depreciation in which these gentlemen speak of other means already at work,—as if their favourite scheme were the only one that held out a hope of

* Page 426, vol. ii.

success. The settlements of Sierra Leone and Liberia perhaps have not answered all expectations ; but how immeasurably superior the condition of the inhabitants to that from which they were rescued. I hardly think it fair in the writers to cite some instance of childish superstition, probably displayed by lately captured Africans, as a specimen of the religious habits of the people of Sierra Leone, when the missionaries who instruct them so clearly prove the respectability, good conduct, and christian faith of the great majority. The dissensions spoken of as disturbing Liberia, show men at least advanced far beyond the slave or the savage, for they find vent in two periodical journals, published at Monrovia. And late reports show an improvement in prosperity and good government which is surprisingly rapid. And I wish that no slighting terms had been employed of the “ *partial* encouragement of commerce—the establishment of a few schools—the nominal conversion to Christianity of all whom we have been able to save from slavery.”

It is also to be lamented that they do not once allude to the expedient of establishing settlements along the coast, much more effective from being near the centre of commercial operations, and less liable to the objection of unhealthiness. All these things, confessedly insuf-

ficient in themselves to bring about the mighty change from barbarism and slavery to freedom and civilization, are yet essential to that end, for accomplishing which against the obstacles opposed to it, no lawful means can be spared.

You will admire the faithful adherence of these officers to the project in which they were embarked ; and even their indulgence of a hope to repeat the enterprise in spite of all discouragements, and after its melancholy termination. They will not allow it to be called a FAILURE, (vol. ii. 402;) but they account for the *failure*, in page 403, by accidental obstacles. Before explaining their views, however, they think proper to write an essay on "The Slave Question," professing "great diffidence," indeed, but displaying the utmost decision and confidence in their conclusions. And these conclusions are truly astonishing. That those who are recording an expensive and abortive attempt at the extinction of slavery, which they themselves describe as entailing fatal consequences, should set themselves up to condemn the course that has been followed by all the governments of England for thirty years, with the same object, would seem scarcely credible—that they who freely admit their mistakes should pronounce against operations which at the same period were eminently successful—that the same men who complacently recommend a scheme

for organizing a colony on the banks of the Niger should call their country to "repentance" for the sin of rescuing thousands of Africans from bondage on the coast, shows boldness at least, and requires some strong reasons. The more so, as they admit that they possess no means of judging which are not open to all, and that the expedition of which they write furnished no peculiar means of forming an opinion.

They talk, indeed, in general terms, as if they had witnessed "impressions of its baneful operations in the interior;" that is, I suppose, an opinion among the natives that the suppression of slave trading on the western coast "does more harm than good." This would be fully accounted for by the misrepresentations of their plundering neighbours: and yet the writers report no particulars of the slave trade on the coast, or the suppression of it having been made the subject of any of their conversations with the natives. The only allusion to either which I found in their narrative was their own just boast, as Englishmen, of the strict blockade by which the exportation of Africans is prevented, and the natural satisfaction with which the African chief received that information.

One great objection which they urge against our preventive measures is, that "we draw on ourselves *all the odium of the overbearing*, to the

real prejudice of *friendly intercourse, mutual interests*, and the question at issue." With all men with whom we must communicate, it may be desirable that our intercourse should be not unfriendly; but friendly intercourse between officers of the British navy and the slave-trader sounds strangely. Any mutual or common interest with that unprincipled oppressor of his fellow-men, is, above all things, to be deprecated. His conscience must be seared by his evil habits, his understanding perverted by his infamous profits, but our participation in his interests, can but confirm him in his present career of crime. Our toleration would give security and impunity to his traffic, and while our feeble persuasions would provoke the same ridicule which falls on our *saints and hypocrites*,* there is danger that English subjects may be converted by him to share his gain and his guilt.

I do not propose to repeat my attempts to prove that the leading topics commonly urged against the suppression are fallacious; that the acts of personal cruelty practised in carrying on the slave trade itself are grossly exaggerated by the traders, for the purpose of fixing

* The whole is worth studying in these times. You will have been reminded of what may perhaps be called the best line in Pope's finest passage—

"See all our fools aspiring to be knaves!"

their own guilt on the suppressors ; that some surplus suffering, in particular instances, must have been from the first foreseen as the result of our interference, but that the horrors and cruelties now exclusively imputed to the suppression are for the most part inseparable from all slave-trading, and that the increase in the amount of slave-trade which would follow the removal of every check, would turn the balance of suffering to the other side, and raise it to an incalculable extent. But I wish to observe on a new view of the subject here propounded, and on the substitute for our squadron, which these ingenious men present to the people of England, as the means of extirpating the evil.

Their new view is original. It turns on time. “ It is only *half a century* since England, so proud of her exertions in this cause, was more deeply implicated in the practice than any of the nations which we now denounce with all the virulence and want of charity customary with those who have tardily come to a knowledge of the error of their ways.” The year 1788 is the date assigned to the first check produced in England by this conviction ; but *twenty years* more were required for the abolition of the trade ; *twenty years* more were consumed in persuading her to emancipate her slaves ; “ which even required other *ten years* to be carried into effect. Thus England took *fifty*

years to meditate and resolve on an act of justice to Africa; yet we expect other nations—implicated like ourselves—to jump at once to the conclusions we had formed, after such fierce and long struggles between obdurate selfishness and humanity.” Afterwards, “If the voice of humanity required so many years to make itself heard in England, it is injustice to *ourselves* to suppose that other nations will listen to it immediately that it is propounded to them; and injustice to *them* to assume that they will require longer consideration if left to their unconstrained judgment.”

Now if the time for enforcing an observance of the principle of justice is to be measured by the Rule of Three, I fear we must fix the commencement of our own period at a still earlier date, and thus allow Brazil and Cuba, or rather let me say the slave-traders of those regions, a much longer indulgence in the traffic. Long before 1788, when Clarkson and Wilberforce began to awaken the people, Granville Sharp had undertaken, if possible, a still nobler task. He had qualified himself, by study directed to that end, to assert the contested but sacred right of personal freedom. He stormed the error which pervaded the minds of English lawyers in 1772, and demonstrated to an unwilling court, in Westminster Hall, that the enslaved negro, the moment he

breathed the air of England, was free. The Abbé Raynal, of whose translated work on the Indies the third edition appeared in London in 1776, following the doctrine of Montesquieu, supported by the Abbé's personal observation, M. Latrobe, and others, who had witnessed *slavery* in the West Indies, denounced its horrors, though far less revolting than the *trade*, to the indignation of England. Burke, Johnson, Cowper, were clear on the principle, and almost violent in their invective; even in the early days of the Spectator* a glimpse of light was let in on the afflicting truth. England took near a century to reflect on the subject before she resolved on active measures for preventing this unparalleled crime; and according to the arithmetical reasoning here employed, Cuba and Brazil ought to be allowed the same period; twenty years for convincing the traders that their practice is immoral, twenty more for continuing it with limitations, and even then ten more for carrying it into effect. When then did their meditations on the subject begin, and from what period are we to reckon the time for which they may be allowed to continue it?

Both Spain and Portugal were represented, in 1814, at the Great Congress of the European na-

* Probably most persons derived their first hostility to slave-trading, from the simple and affecting tale of Inkle and Yarico, in the 11th number.

tions at Vienna ; at least they knew of its solemn declaration against the slave-trade. Soon after, both concluded treaties for its abolition, from which both receive great advantage. That abolition was not to be immediate, but the contracts betrayed an excessive tenderness to weaker powers and towards practices, in which England had been implicated. The suppression was clogged with restrictions as to time and space, which gave all their merchants ample opportunity of turning their capital into innocent channels, and their planters of improving the condition of their wretched slaves. Abolition could not be more gradual ; in fact, the first treaties were protective of the trade. That concluded with Brazil, in 1826, was entangled in such difficulties that officers were ruined for the zealous performance of their duty, and deterred from such hazardous efforts. That same treaty, however, and the English Act of 1827, provided that the restrictions should cease when a final arrangement should be made ; and such final arrangement, made in 1830, declared that from thenceforth the slave dealer should be "deemed and treated as a pirate."

During all this time, at least, it is possible that public opinion in Brazil, even if the debates in the British Parliament and its acts had never penetrated, may have been meditating on

a subject so deeply interesting. The government had certainly come to a resolution, when it consented to that stipulation. The debates of their own senate, and leading articles in their journals, plainly show that now the slave trade, or, as it is called, "o trafico," is as much deprecated at Rio Janeiro as it was thirty years ago in Manchester and London.* It is condemned on grounds of enlightened policy, as well as higher considerations, all pointing at the extinction of slavery as a curse to their country, and tending to the annihilation of the traffic which keeps alive that detested institution.

I am not aware of any stronger language applied to slave traders than that of the censors of our "virulence and want of charity," whose work I am examining. They more than once speak of "the lawless wretches who now practise the trade with the maddening spirit of the gamester." (Page. 417.) Their lash does

* One of the Rio papers observes on recent debates there, with great ability. "But it is in the continual supply or recruitment of slaves, and the unlimited importation from without, that cupidity and the selfish passions find their aliment, &c." Senhor Ferraz declared, amidst loud applause, his determination to enter the lists against the unprincipled speculators who carry on the infamous traffic in human flesh, condemned by all who do not share its profits. Senhor Tavares and other eloquent members, expressed similar sentiments, and were received with acclamations.

not spare the *respectable* English merchant who pursued this calling in former times. "The white man, in the pride of superior mental and physical endowments, has dragged the unresisting negro from his loved repose, and compelled him to minister to his inordinate demands, regardless of the expense of blood and suffering which it entailed." The complaint of our impatience in requiring that effective measures for abolition should at length be set about in good earnest, after more than thirty years of meditation, resolution, declaration, treaty, and remonstrance,—to talk of this as *jumping* to a conclusion, even in the mouth of a Brazilian man-stealer, would be too preposterous.

But the reasoning here employed assumes that the English slave trade was abolished by persuasion, by convincing the traders that it was a wicked speculation. Their conscience was awakened, and they turned from their evil ways. Was this the fact? Their taste was shocked, and they became ashamed of such foul practices. Then what necessity for enacting severe penalties against them, and publicly branding them with the names of pirate, robber, and felon? The fact is, that the slave traders of England resisted the abolition till the last, and were convinced of its propriety by nothing but the dread of punishment, confiscation, and dis-

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grace, awaiting the pirate. The slave trade was not *made* infamous by act of parliament, but having been (though infamous it was and ever must be) protected and encouraged by acts of parliament, the repeal of those acts left it exposed in its natural colours. In like manner, the slave-traders of Brazil, long tempted to sin by impunity and connivance, will be deterred from it by no other means than annexing to the crime its true character and just penalty. It is idle to expect that such offenders are accessible to any other considerations than fear and interest. The menaced vengeance of the law put an end to English slave-trading, and would doubtless have the same effect in Brazil, unless the removal of our squadron made the crime too easy of commission for the temptation to be resisted.

In truth, the wonder is, that our efforts have been limited to direct prevention, and have not involved that which arises from punishment; for how could the subject of any state complain that he has been intercepted in his progress towards the consummation of that which his country pronounces an enormous crime? How could any state resent the interference of another state in putting an end to cruelties and horrors which they have jointly condemned, and mutually bound themselves to extirpate?

You now wish to know what substitute these experienced authors “humbly suggest” for the squadron which certainly effected something in the reduction of the slave trade, at the very time *they* were so differently employed. I copy their very words and emphasis :—“That other nations be *exhorted to tread in our early path of amendment*, in the hope that it may lead them to a similar result. That treaties be made with those nations based on the Bill of 1788, *with clauses providing for the gradual extinction of the slave trade, the introduction of free labour, and the progressive emancipation of the negroes.*” They afterwards subjoin, “The breathing time and cessation of powerful and all-pervading excitement produced by opposition will *enable* the selfish to see the advantage of prolonging life by relaxing toil over the present cruel system of working their slaves to death. *Eventually* they *may* come to the understanding that free labour will be the most productive.”

This is the first half of the panacea ;—treaties ! as if England could make them for both parties :—treaties ! as if none had already been made and violated without redress :—treaties ! giving free license to slave-trading based on an act of the English parliament, which could only be enforced by penalties on Brazilian subjects ; with a clause for the gradual extinction of the slave trade,

which they still think essential to their prosperity, and which the same treaties are to permit ; a clause for the introduction of free labour, which can only be carried into effect by the slave holders ; a clause for the gradual emancipation of the negroes, whom they regard as goods and chattels, subjects of barter, and of trade. Is there to be compensation ? Who is to assess it ? the high contracting parties ? Who to pay it ? the overburthened people ? Will they consent, and if not, by whom must they be coerced ? Plainly by the more powerful party to the treaty, which must in such case assume the sovereignty of an empire proud and jealous of its independence, and can enforce none of the proposed stipulations by other means than war. It is proposed thus to escape "*the odium of the overbearing.*"

" There is reason to hope," (Messrs. Allen and Thompson declare,) " that the first operation of such a treaty would be to take the traffic out of the hands of the lawless wretches, &c., and to transfer it to persons likely to allow their interests to be tempered by humanity." It is then to be kept alive, but persons must be looked up who can steal men for their own interest, and yet possess the principles of honour and humanity ! And again, we must have the means of knowing whether the treaties are infringed or not ; must therefore appoint inspectors to superintend the

loading in Africa, the treatment aboard the slaver, the unloading in Brazil; and further, I presume, must inquire of the conduct of the planters to their slaves, that we may judge whether they pay due deference to English exhortations recommending gradual extinction and progressive emancipation! Thus a *friendly intercourse* is to be maintained, with due regard to *mutual interests*!

The second half of this great remedial measure I have already sketched,—the colony at the confluence of Niger and Chadda. Its duty will be protection by force against the tribe of the Filatahs, those savage plunderers who hunt their weaker neighbours into the toils of slavery. The chiefs repeatedly told Captain Trotter that “the *way must be cleansed* of the Filatahs:” no peace, no improvement, without armed resistance to their inroads. Our projectors agree to this, and provide means not only for placing a disposable force in constant readiness to repel their infamous aggression; but also “to preserve all nations within reach from the horrors of war, and thereby be a great means of *suppressing the slave-trade*.”

The slave hunt then—an established usage of the country—is to be suppressed in the interior by force, while the demand on the coast is brisk and uninterrupted, the price high, the spirit of gambling excited to madness, the excitement in-

flamed by opposition. While the coasting trade is left entirely free, the internal trade is to be crippled and embarrassed. This partiality to the Brazilians seems hard on the Filatahs. The Brazilians profess that Christianity which has not yet been taught to their professional brethren in the trade of plunder and bloodshed. But the consequences of such an attempt at suppression have been already the subjects of vehement declamation. The slave-hunt will be inflamed with aggravated cruelties; the numbers taken must exceed the order, to meet the deficiency to be created by interruption; their droves to the coast must be hurried with utter contempt of life; and if the slaver does not keep her appointment on the coast to a single day, an extensive massacre must be coolly committed, and as coolly ascribed to our *philanthropic* importation of horrors and cruelties into an innocent trade; for the Filatahs would have followed it with all possible respect to the feelings and comforts of their captives, because their own interest is concerned in preserving the life and health of those whom they must sell.

These gentlemen dwell on the pestilential climate of Africa, and publish that table of the comparative mortality on various stations, on which some discussion has already taken place. This cannot have been considerably pressed as

an argument against the coasting squadron, because if well considered, it would not be fair. Even if that average were correct with regard to *Africa*, it cannot be applied to that distance from the coast of Africa at which the squadron acts. The squadron is, and has been for several years, reported healthy. This narrative bears the same testimony, for the crews that had suffered so severely from going up the uncleared country, were conveyed to this coast for the restoration of their health, and were in great measure restored by the breezes blowing over that sea, which is called pestilential.

But although a speedy abandonment of our attempts at suppression is here anticipated, "let us not," say Captain Allen and Dr. Thomson, "after such a lavish expenditure in trying an experiment, suffer it to appear that we abandon it from motives of parsimony." They then hint at "some more feasible way of attaining the desired end," "by calling forth the resources of the country," but "on broad and rational principles." In other words, let us recall the squadron, and let us employ the money saved in equipping more expeditions up the Niger.

Yet this proposal will hardly meet the approbation of those who not only grudge all the money bestowed on any attempts at suppression, but boldly maintain that the people neither do nor ought to

concern themselves with any other question than the easiest means of procuring cheap sugar:— who appeal to public opinion to decide, but first bribe the judge by that direct gain, and then by the larger benefit accruing to the revenue from slave trading. Against this end, which involves the eternal desolation of Africa, an end sought to be attained by reasons so demoralizing and degrading, the struggle must be made.

The views which I have been combating would hardly have required exposure, if it were not for the lamentable prevalence of this feeling of self-interest. But even these arguments might, if unopposed, have an important influence at a critical period, not from their value, assuredly, but because they proceed from persons who will have credit for peculiar means of understanding the slave question, and whose wishes for the welfare of Africa have been proved to be sincere and ardent by their sacrifices and sufferings; but it is satisfactory to see no concurrence in these opinions from their gallant and distinguished leader, Captain Trotter. They now publish, however, their sentiments “under the sanction of the Colonial Office and of the Admiralty, though I trust only for the purpose of that discussion which we invite.” In conversation with benevolent persons, I have heard

reasons equally unsatisfactory very gravely brought forward. All are clubbed together, and bewilder the mind, fatigued with the distressing subject, and not unwilling to be convinced that expense may be avoided, and positive gain secured, without the forfeiture of reputation, the loss of honour, the sacrifice of integrity. A separation and analysis of the combined arguments affords the only chance of creating a more wholesome impression, and I firmly believe that such an examination fairly and calmly made will prove to those who really wish to see the end of slavery and the slave trade, that every fact adduced as a reason against the suppression is in truth decidedly in favour of our perseverance.

Perhaps the passage which in the last place I am about to cite, is the most astonishing example that was ever seen of the effects of controversial zeal on candid and liberal minds. Captain Allen and Dr. Thomson, apostles and martyrs of anti-slavery, have published (vol. ii. 411) the following synopsis of the drama acted by three characters—the purveyor of slaves, the dealer, and the suppressor. “The two last preside over a gulf of torture; they rival one another in stimulating the first to provide victims; *their only contention*, which shall obtain out of the increasing supply the greatest number for his particular vortex; and the only difference between the vor-

tices is, in the one a certain prospect of *a life of toil*, with an accompanying *portion of comfort*, which is not fallacious because interested; in the other a dim, undefinable, and, to the victims who are hurried into it, an inappreciable vista of freedom and happiness. They have no choice; but if they had, they could see *no difference in the probationary sufferings.*"

This comparison actually leaves a doubt whether the liberation of the captive be not an injury rather than a blessing, and his settlement in Sierra Leone a harder fate than that of the slave delivered to his purchaser. It forces on our mind a subject almost too painful for contemplation, not open to observation like the chain and the scourge, but the inevitable and far worse result of the trade. Often alluded to, but too shocking to be dwelt upon without necessity, that necessity has arisen from this argument.

The negroes are forced by hundreds on board of the slaver, and then, even if Sir W. Dolbin's Act were strictly observed, very closely packed. Young, healthy, when loaded, of warm temperaments, and unregulated passions, they lie together without covering in a tropical climate, without exercise, for many days, twenty, thirty, or perhaps more than forty. To us, who lately were forced to study the condition of our penal settlements, the

danger is too obvious. In those settlements this horrid consequence was brought on guilty men by their own delinquency. Those punished in the slaver are innocent and unoffending, and undergo their degradation, because their guilty oppressors can make a profit from the sale of their fellow-creatures.

Arrived on the Brazilian coast, this curse at least is immediately taken off. No ; the cargo remains in the vessel till the merchant finds his account in bringing it to market. This may be an interval of weeks or even months. Of course the vicious fermentation continues to fester and spread : the pollution becomes general and inveterate.

The slaves are at length delivered to a master, who has some interest in their life, and therefore will not entirely overlook their *comfort*. But that master's sole ruling principle is gain ; his " present cruel system is that of working his slaves to death." The corollary—it is cheaper to buy than breed—is approved by all the experience of the Brazilian planter. The practical consequence, the rigid exclusion of women from the plantation, would soon be followed by the disappearance of the negro race from Brazil, if it were not constantly renewed by fresh importations and the same series of iniquities unrelentingly repeated.

This is no picture of infernal torments devised by a wild mythology ; no fabulous tale invented to warn mankind against the malignity of unbridled power ; no antiquated history of obsolete and now impossible facts. It is a true report, a faithful diary, of actual life. Even now, at every moment of that happy existence with which nature and providence have blessed this happy land, all the fearful scenes are acting. At this very moment the savage bandits are raking peaceful villages with fire and sword, and seizing or slaughtering their affrighted prey. At this moment savagelike captors are driving their chained gangs to the coast. Even now the slavers are packing the human cargo in narrower space than bales of goods would require ; while others are borne across the Atlantic, others kept in hulks off the Brazilian shore. At this and every hour the cane-fields are tilled by scourged gangs debarred all intercourse with women, and by systematic ill-usage consumed in the shortest time, and unceasingly replaced by fresh victims.

And, the truth cannot be disguised, all this follows " as the night the day," from considering the slave trade to be protected by just principles of political economy, and from the atrocious falsehood that man can, consistently with the law of nature, be the property of man. Our

countrymen, I am confident, have almost universally abstained from personal participation in these transactions; but our country has consented to stimulate and encourage them, on the vague speculation that such remote possibilities as are set forth by Messrs. Allen and Thomson may by degrees, after the lapse of ages, correct them. She profits by the misery of mankind. Her manufactures tempt to the first act of violence, and the labour which is ultimately placed at the disposal of the planters saves her sons a penny in the pound in the price of sugar,—a groat a-year in the pound sterling in their public taxes. But these advantages, to be permanent, require not the extinction, but the extension, of the slave trade. And if the people can be persuaded that that traffic owes all its horrors and cruelties to the squadron, by which it has been so effectually diminished, not only ought the squadron to be recalled, but the slave trade code repealed, and the whole people incited to commit acts which now brand the perpetrator as a pirate, a robber, and a felon. The re-establishment of slavery itself in our colonies with all its horrors, happily now forgotten, must ensue.

This is the trade which we are exhorted to legalize, to sanction, and protect in others. To share in its achievements, as well as in their in-

direct advantages, is but a single step in the downward progress.

After what we have witnessed, we shall hardly be surprised by any proposition which may hereafter be made in parliament. After the discussions we have heard, we may perhaps have these volumes quoted upon us, not for the schemes which they recommend, but for their denunciation of all rival exertions ; not for their description of the enormity and inveteracy of the evil, which loudly challenges all lawful means to counteract it, but for decrying the most powerful means that have been employed.

You will always be found maintaining your honourable post with wonted energy and vigor. The narrative of the Niger Expedition, probably, has not found its way to the south of France, and it may not have been useless to apprise you of its unexpected line of argument. And I trust that these views will be permitted to find their way to the firesides of all those who read, and the hearts and minds of all who can think and feel.

Excuse the imperfect manner in which I have performed a task so needful and so urgent, but

which I would gladly have seen undertaken by others more competent and equally pledged to the cause.

Yours ever,

DENMAN.

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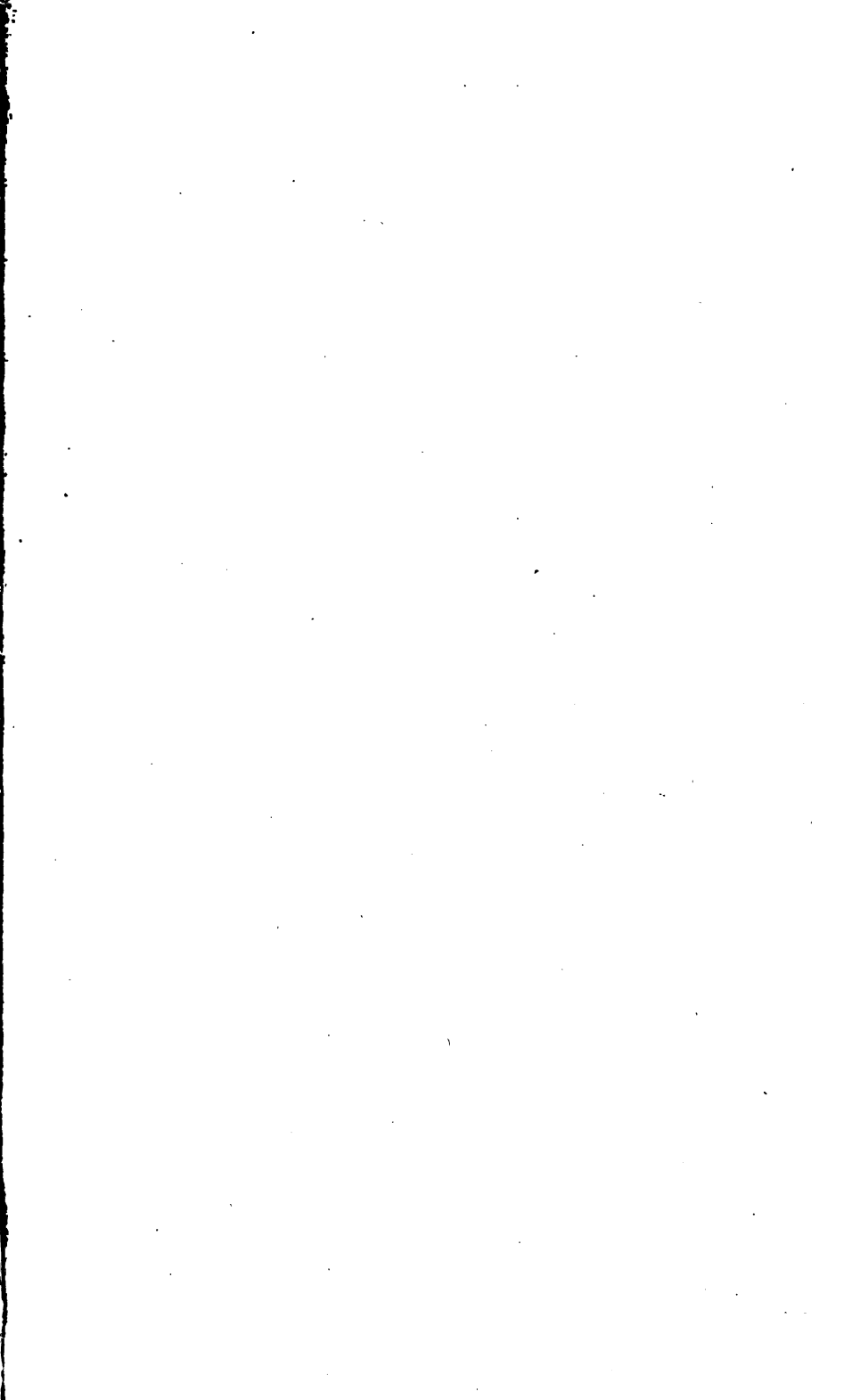
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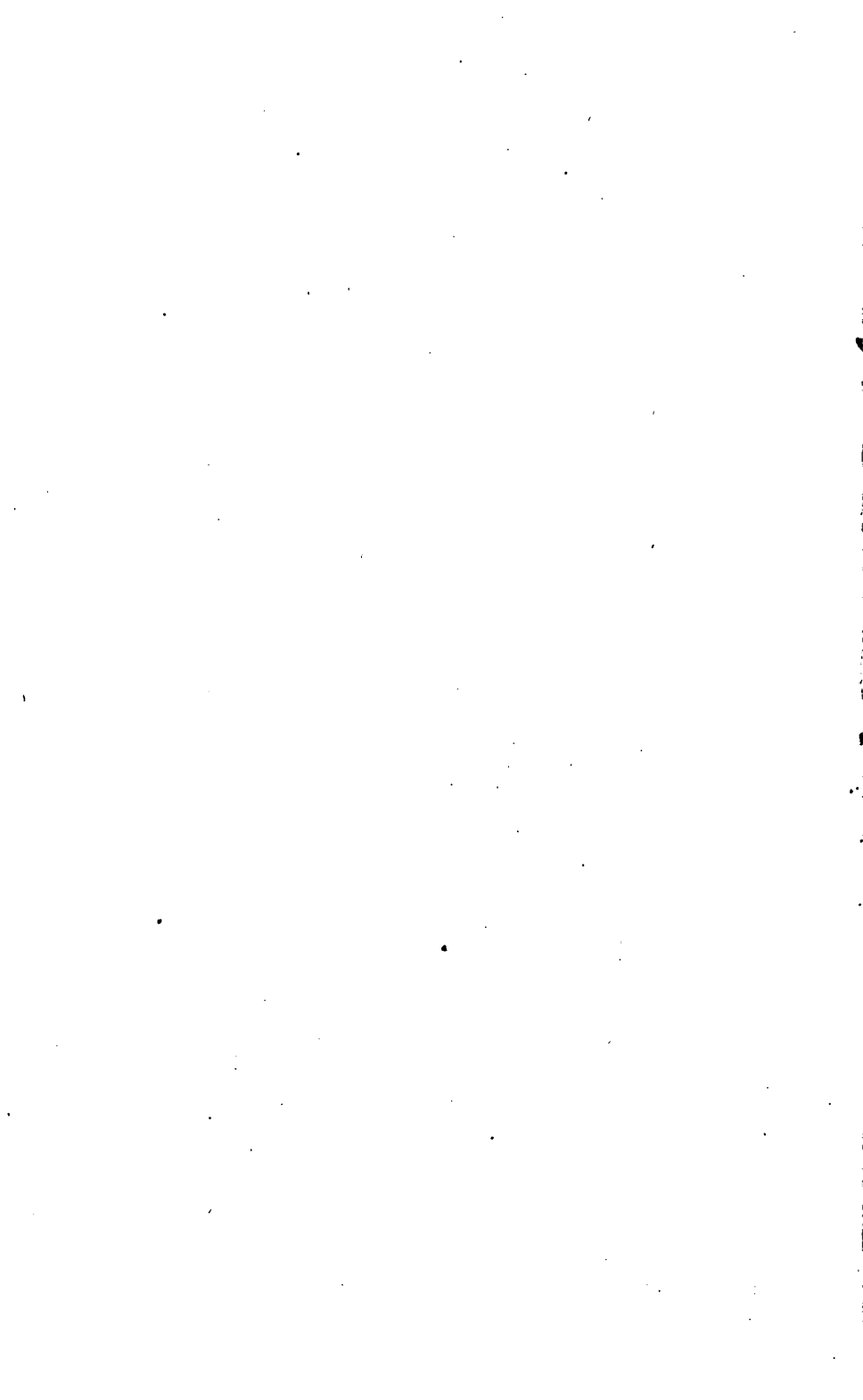
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